

We struggle with fears everyday
Kajol

Actor doesn't believe in new year's resolutions.
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DEEPIKA PODUKONE
I make time for the one I love

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Deepika Padukone Is Charting New Horizons With Her Self-Care Journey



There's a quiet resilience to Deepika Padukone. It comes through with her impressive body of work that she's carefully crafted through the years, playing disparate roles that embody who the modern Indian woman is. ("being vulnerable is powerful," she tells me emphatically). It comes through when she talks passionately about embarking on an entrepreneurial journey with the launch of her self-care brand, 82°E, and when she discusses how important it is to build a self-sustaining

from Chennai, as she faced six women in pink saris, all Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA), to discuss in detail the numerous mental health issues prevalent in their communities – postpartum depression among new mothers, suicidal tendencies and stigma-induced trauma amid people with disabilities. Flanked by her mother, Ujjala, counsellor Anna Chandy on one side, sister Anisha, and friend and Live Love Laugh Foundation trustee Ananth Narayanan on the other,

Deepika Padukone is shifting old paradigms and starting new conversations

ecosystem to safeguard her mental health

Throughout her career in sports, fashion, and films, Padukone has operated from a place of curiosity and non-judgment; she's started hard conversations about mental health, cracked open taboos, and has looked for connection and resonance everywhere she can find it. "I've always been quietly confident, and it stems from self-preservation. I don't find the need to make a splash with everything I do. I enjoy doing things that feel organic and authentic," she says.

The actor straddles two different worlds gracefully; she effortlessly made the Cannes red carpet her playground as a jury member for the prestigious film festival earlier in the year. She's been spotted at Louis Vuitton runway shows worldwide as their global ambassador (since May this year) and also became the ambassador for Cartier in October 2022. She visited Chinna Chinna Ikkam village of Tiruvallur district, about 80 kilometers

Padukone interacted with activists, health workers, caregivers and the media. In a candid chat, Padukone tells us why self-care is more about replenishing her soul, what she most looks forward to in a day, and why she won't apologise for being ambitious.

With 82°E, you're taking India to the world. Were you nervous or empowered, or both?

DEEPIKA PADUKONE: It would have to be both. When it comes to sharing something so personal with the world, it makes you a bit nervous. I always approach life and work with a curious, open-minded, and service-centric focus, which holds to what we've created. We ask questions about all of it. We believe people can take what serves them and leave what doesn't. We recommend what we love and think is worthy of your time. But it's also empowering because being completely honest with our intentions with the brand meant that we were selling a transparent experience.



Being in the public eye and straddling fame and other commitments, how important has it been to create your self-sustaining ecosystem?

DP: It comes with having different experiences in life. And as you navigate it all, you realise that it becomes essential to create small pockets of happiness that help you consistently nurture your mind, body and spirit. I've spoken to many women over the years who have successfully carved out time for self-care beyond the little things we do daily. I've consciously built a safe space for myself through rituals that help me stay true to who I am. For me, it is a meeting ground for you when you need assistance or need to be alone, for others who need the same. It's a simple concept with a significant impact. Having a safe space is hugely important to me. There's something powerful about not apologising for being who you are, what you're experiencing, or what you've done. You feel less afraid when you feel loved and confident instead of regretful and defensive. And when you feel less afraid, you can process and work towards change more freely. I make time for the ones I love because they are the ones who form the crux of my ecosystem. It's important for me to have them around.

Is being human, in this age of social media where people constantly present perfection, something you've allowed yourself to be?

DP: Being in the public eye will open you up to scrutiny – that's natural. But that hasn't stopped me from being open to new people and experiences. The uncertainty can sometimes feel scary or at least unfamiliar if you're not accustomed to it, but I've tried to be brave and vulnerable. As scary as it is to open up to the world about things that make you human, communicate your fears and be honest about how you choose to evolve. Every time you open up, you're working towards a solution instead of closing yourself off.

There is tremendous pressure to be likeable when you are a woman, or you risk being misunderstood, especially when a woman is ambitious. How have you perceived ambition?



DP: I've always been competitive because that's just the sportsperson in me. Do I apologise for being ambitious? No. It is not something we should apologise for. In most cases, ambitious women are viewed as pushy, selfish and unlikeable. I don't necessarily think success is so off-putting, but the desire for something more inspires feelings of disdain. We all, irrespective of gender, deserve to want more. We all deserve to dream big.

You've always played empowered women on screen. Do you perceive these characters through your own life experiences? Do they have to, in some way, echo your strengths and

vulnerabilities as a person? Or do you enjoy playing characters that are far removed from yourself?

DP: I've always played characters that imbibe a little bit of who I am, but I've always enjoyed essaying roles that are starkly removed from who I am too. It's about finding a balance in telling a story convincingly. Veronica (in Cocktail) was nothing like me in real life. She's fiery, feisty and fierce. But deep down, she had an emotional core that longed for love and friendship. Her uniqueness intrigued me. In Piku, I had no frills or crutches to rely on; I had to keep it as authentic as possible.

BOLLYWOOD'S HIGH POINTS OF 2022



Boycott trends, box office ice bombs, besharam trolls.

It was a turbulent year for Bollywood as naysayers and haters got busy writing off the Hindi film industry.

But if one chooses to see the glass half full, there are quite a few silver linings too.

As 2022 readies to bid adieu, the 10 high points of the year.



Deepika Padukone: Face of India

From jury duties at Cannes to unveiling the FIFA World Cup at the final to brand ambassador of luxury brands like Louis Vuitton and Cartier to receiving honours at the TIME 100 Impact Awards, Deepika's worldwide fame had proud desis like Malaika Arora exclaiming 'eternal trendsetter'

while sharing pictures of the star's endorsements at international airports on social media.

Some folks can focus on the colour of her bikini in Pathaan, but we agree with Malla, wardrobe choice at the Lusail stadium notwithstanding.



Kapil Sharma gets serious

There's more to Kapil Sharma than pedestrian jokes. His surprisingly self-deprecating wit and personal admissions on the Netflix special Kapil Sharma: I'm Not Done Yet revealed the human behind the humourist.

Even so, nobody could have envisioned the garrulous comedian in the part of a food delivery guy under tremendous financial duress until he bowled critics over with his realistic performance

in *Zwigato*. Directed by Nandita Das, the drama has won rave reviews for Sharma's surprise package at the Toronto Film Festival and International Film Festival of Kerala.

'Kapil Sharma is a revelation in *Zwigato*, playing a quiet, brooding character, far removed from his popular, but loud comedy shows. There is a real actor in him that no one had explored.'



Bollywood VFX comes of age

Alright, so there's still miles to go before anyone can sleep, but this year, Bollywood made movies about superheroes and werewolves without embarrassing itself.

The flaming spectacle of *Brahmastra: Part One-Shiva* was splendid to behold and Bhediya's assaulting beast led to moments of authentic scare.



Countdown for SRK

Waiting for Shah Rukh Khan to come out with a new movie since 2018's *Zero* has become a public pastime.

But 2022 is when things got truly nail-biting when every passing cameo (*Brahmastra*, *Laal Singh Chaddha*, *Rocketry: The Nambi Effect*) had the nation heaving a collective sigh while relating to Kamala Khan's fangirl

moment -- There is no such thing as a bad Shah Rukh Khan movie -- in *Ms Marvel*, hoping to get their question answered every time he spared 15 minutes for his popular #AskSRK Twitter sessions or lapping teasers and titbits of his next, *Pathaan*, *Dunki* and *Jawan*.

2023 will be the year of the SRK fan.



Accolades, awards, acclaim for All That Breathes

Winner at prestigious film festivals like Sundance, Cannes, BFI and recipient of rave reviews by the likes of The Guardian, The New York Times and Los Angeles Times, which called it the most beautifully realised documentary in recent memory, Delhi film-maker Shaunak Sen gave Indian cinephiles tons to feel hyped up about with his potent documentary about two brothers committed to saving black kites under threat from the capital city's unbearably contaminated air.

Don't be surprised if you catch Sen delivering a triumphant Oscar speech in March.



Superstar Shefali

Just look at Shefali Shah's body of work in 2022 -- a cop working round-the-clock to nab a murderous gang in Delhi Crime, a morally ambiguous doctor in Human, a home cook standing by her daughter through a toxic marriage in Darlings, a wronged domestic help oblivious that her employer is responsible for her daughter's accident in Jalsa and a no-nonsense head of the gynaecology department exasperated by her inept intern in Doctor G.

With every consecutive role, the actress hit the ball out of the park.

Six projects, six characters yet no overlapping, no overkill.

What a star.



RRR's world domination

Until RRR, which raked in a massive number in its Hindi dubbed avatar as well, everybody thought only poverty porn or underdog period dramas could impress an overseas audience.

But S S Rajamouli's massy crowd-pleaser, boasting of dance moves so flawless even CGI would fail, has gone well beyond its domestic reign to unleash unprecedented mania among the phoren press and public.

RRR is already on numerous critics' annual Best Films list, has nabbed multiple Golden Globe nominations and may well be on its way to conquer the Oscars despite the Film Federation of India picking a lesser-known Gujarati film over 'bigger than Ben-Hur' as India's entry for Best International Feature Film.



Tabu's Midas touch

Kartik Aaryan can go about town staking claim to Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2's superhit fervour.

Ajay Devgn can bask in Drishyam 2's blockbuster box office.

But, really, it is Tabu's indisputable talent and golden presence that drove these mediocre movies to that degree of success.



Alia Bhatt: Woman on Top



Amitabh Bachchan: 80 and not out

Coaching a motley bunch of slum kids to play competitive football in Jhund, schooling a reckless pilot's decision to emergency land in Runway 34, head of a superhero cult and wielder of prabhastra in Brahmastra, bereaved husband and disheartened father in Goodbye, a hack job author discovering himself on an Everest trek in Unchai, the beloved host of a beloved quiz show returning for Kaun Banega Crorepati's 14th season and the iconic subject of a retrospective giving young fans a one-of-a-kind opportunity to understand his appeal on big screen, the actor turned 80 in style by letting his work speak for his stardom.

She came, she saw, she conquered. And she's still three months away from turning 30.

2022 was a year of dreams for this dazzler. Shakti, check. Sampati, check. Sadbuddhi, check.

It all began when Alia proved an overwhelming number of sceptics wrong by rocking the show singlehandedly as a sex worker-turned-social activist in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Gangubai Kathiawadi. She accomplished the unheard: she overshadowed Bhansali.

Next, she delivered another ace as a victim of domestic violence thrust towards retribution in Darlings, which marked her beginning as a discerning producer as well.

Her radiant presence in money spinners and Oscar hopefuls like Brahmastra and RRR made the taste of success all the more sweeter.

Personal life, too, never looked better. She wed the love of her life against the intimate setting of their balcony. The duo welcome their firstborn, Raha.

2023 is yet to kick in, but Alia already has Karan Johar's Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani and Hollywood debut Heart of Stone lined up for release.

Shah Rukh Khan reveals he wants to do a film like Leon: 'Where I am older, quiet guy, very intense with a grey beard'

Actor Shah Rukh Khan has spoken about wanting to do a film like Leon: The Professional where he will play the 'older, quiet guy, very intense with a grey beard'.

Actor Shah Rukh Khan has revealed that he wants to do a film like Leon: The Professional and portray the character of an 'older, very intense and quiet guy', with a grey beard and matching hair. In a recent interview, Shah Rukh also spoke about his upcoming project Pathaan saying that it is the action film he 'came here to do 32 years ago' and hopes he will 'carry it off' at 57. He also joked that he is 'Batman at night, Superman in the morning, and Spider-Man in the afternoon.' Leon: The Professional (1994) is a French action-thriller written and directed by Luc Besson. It stars Jean Reno, Gary Oldman, and Natalie Portman. The plot centers on Leon, a professional hitman, who reluctantly takes in a twelve-year-old Mathilda Lando after her family is murdered.

Talking about his bucket list, Shah Rukh Khan said on Scoop with Raya, "I want to do everything. I want to do good guys, bad guys, mean guys, happy guys, loving guys, and fighting guys. This year



has been very interesting because I have done Pathaan, which is the action film I came here to do 32 years ago. So, hopefully, at 57 I still look like I'll carry it off. I have done a film, and I always wanted to try the south Indian genre. It's a different set of doing. It's called Jawan. And then I always wanted to work with Rajkumar Hirani. You know we have been trying to work since 3 Idiots & Munna Bhai MBBS. So, finally, that's happening." He also said, "After this, I want to do a film like Leon: The Professional. Not Leon but a film like where I am older, quiet guy, very intense with a grey beard & grey hair. I don't know. I am very playful about it. I don't take the characters and roles that I do. I just want to tell a story, somebody has the desire to

tell. And I want to tell it to the best of my capabilities. So, if a director has a story and says this is what we love, I will say, I also love it. Now let me try and make it the best that I can for you. So, I enjoy it. I am Batman at night, Superman in the morning & Spider-Man in the afternoon. So, I just want to play all kinds of characters." Pathaan, helmed by Siddharth Anand, is an action thriller that features Deepika Padukone and John Abraham alongside Shah Rukh. The film is all set to hit the theatres on January 25, 2023. Apart from this, Shah Rukh will also be seen in Atlee's upcoming action-thriller Jawan with Nayanthara. He also has director Rajkumar Hirani's next Dunki opposite Taapsee Pannu.



MASABA GUPTA SAYS SHE'S NOT LIKE MOM NEENA GUPTA: 'I LIKE TAGS, I'M VERY AMBITIOUS AND WANT TO INFLUENCE A GENERATION

Masaba Gupta said that, unlike Neena Gupta, she likes labels and tags, and is very ambitious. The fashion designer and actor said she likes being called 'multiple things' and wants to influence a generation.

Masaba Gupta recently opened up about being hailed as a 'millennial star', 'destiny's child', and 'game changer' in a new interview. The fashion designer, entrepreneur, and actor said she likes such labels. Masaba also revealed that, unlike her mother, actor Neena Gupta, she likes 'tags' and 'goes after them' because they are important to her. Masaba added she was 'very ambitious' and wanted to 'influence a generation' with her work. Masaba also spoke about reading all the reviews of her Netflix show *Masaba Masaba*, and Prime Video's *Modern Love Mumbai* (2022), which featured her. She said she 'reads the good stuff and the bad' and added she reads them many times to 'find something' that might help her become a

better actor or a business person. Masaba Gupta further said she was grateful for being relevant, and added that 'not everyone can be relevant', hence when somebody labels her as relevant, she 'always embraces it'.

"I'm not like my mom (Neena Gupta; actor). I like tags and I go after them because they are important to me. I'm very ambitious like that. I want to be called multiple things. I want to influence a generation," Masaba told News18. She further said, "Labels like reviews are always welcome. I take everything I can get. I love it. I collect all my magazine covers and I read them right from the first word to the last. I frame them sometimes." Masaba, who is also a jewelry designer and has her own beauty label, made her foray into acting with *Masaba Masaba* in August 2020. Directed by Sonam Nair, it also features Neena Gupta. Apart from playing herself in the second season of her web series that

was released in July this year, Masaba also featured in a short, titled *I Love Thane*, in the anthology film *Modern Love Mumbai*. It was directed by actor-writer Dhruv Sehgal and also featured Ritwik Bhowmik.

In an interview earlier this month, Masaba had spoken about whether being the daughter of Neena Gupta and former West Indies cricketer Viv Richards had ever been disadvantageous to her. In the interview with News18, Masaba said that while most of the time it has helped her, there were occasions, when it did not work out for her. Masaba had said, "I think 70 percent of the time it has helped me, and 30 percent of the time it's gone against me. And the reason it has gone against me is that I think that every time I do a bunch of things people think, 'Oh, she has so much support from her parents financially', or they think I have more doors open for me than other people."



Renuka Shahane on not understanding auditions: It's a cold way of doing things, you get half-baked knowledge

MAGAZINE KING

Renuka Shahane tells us she is very particular about the roles she picks and the screen time does not matter to her

Renuka Shahane is rarely seen on the big screen, but when she does, she makes sure her roles takes the centre stage. The 56-year-old, who recently portrayed the role of Vicky Kaushal's mother in Govinda Naam Mera tells us that she is true "very picky" when it comes to performing on the silver screen, as she is here to make a difference.

"The fact is that whatever roles are offered to me, I do want them to make a difference in the script. It's not the length that actually decides (if I'll do the film), but the fact whether the film can be made or not without that character. It has to be consequential to either the plot or the character that arcs on the emotions. In that sense, yes, I'm choosy," she confesses.

Shedding light on other factors that count, Shahane adds that it

also depends on the people she likes to collaborate with. "You spend so much time and invest so much on a particular subject and if it doesn't see the light of day then you feel shattered. So, whoever you are working with has to see the project through," says the actor, adding that she doesn't pay much heed to things like which production house or banner is backing the film. However, one thing that the Tribhanga director is still not able to wrap her head around is the audition process, instead, she prefers frequent interactions with the directors that ultimately help in bagging and understanding the role.

"For me, as an actor, it's very important to build a character. And that evolves through discussions with directors and then you get to a certain point, which doesn't really happen during an audition. They (auditions) are very raw and too many things are not told about the character. Directors are not even there to direct you. I

just feel it is a cold way of doing things," says Shahane.

Citing an example of working with director Shashank Khaitan on her latest web film, the actor asserts, "Shashank did take my reading, and it wasn't an audition as such. But, he wanted me to read out the script with my input. The moment he tells me what he wants, it's easier for me to build the character, emote and give what is expected of me." Shahane will next be seen in Chakda 'Xpress with Anushka Sharma. Talking further on the process of auditions, she reveals that she met film director Prosit Roy a couple of times before even going to the point of the look test.

"I had conversations and we were talking about the character, and it really helps. So, when you go on the set, it is easier to get into the skin of the character. Whereas, in auditions, you get half-baked knowledge which is not satisfying. That's the reason why I have not cracked them yet," she concludes.



SHRUTI HAASAN SAYS THE PERCEPTION OF HOLLYWOOD ACTORS BEING 'MORE AHEAD, PROGRESSIVE IS NONSENSE': EVERYONE IS DEALING WITH...

Actor Shruti Haasan has said thinking that Hollywood actors 'are more ahead and progressive is nonsense'. She also reacted to Maggie Gyllenhaal's 2015 remark about ageism.

Shruti Haasan has said thinking that Actor Shruti Haasan has reacted to actor Maggie Gyllenhaal's 2015 remark when she said that at the age of 37 she was rejected as the love interest of a 55-year-old actor. In a new interview, Shruti said that the perception that Hollywood actors 'are more ahead and progressive is nonsense'. She added that 'everyone is dealing with the same thing' as it is a 'male-driven society, world, and industry'. Shruti also called it 'normal in society if there is a younger woman with an older man'. Speaking with TheWrap Magazine in 2015, Maggie said, "I'm 37 and I was told recently I was too old to play the lover of a man who was 55. It was astonishing to me. It made me feel bad, and then it

made me feel angry, and then it made me laugh. A lot of actresses are doing incredible work right now, playing real women, complicated women. I don't feel despairing at all." In an interview with Pinkvilla, Shruti said, "I think it is normal in society that if there is a younger woman with an older man not many questions are raised as to whether the older woman wants to remarry or date again, so this is societal conditioning. Your example of a Hollywood actress, oh, we think they are more ahead and progressive is nonsense because everyone is dealing with the same thing. It is a male-driven society, world, and industry as well. So, we are fitting into that. Am I fighting the fight of the questioning? No, not at the moment." you deserve a Dr.'s title before your name. Speaking about ageism in the industry, Shruti said, "I think ageism in the world is an issue. It is a youth and vanity-driven world we live in, especially in the world of social media. The question is do you want to

buy into it or not? There is beauty and grace with every age. There are certain roles you can play with only a certain amount of age and experience and those are the things I like to focus on and not get into the whole ageism talk." Shruti will headline an international film *The Eye*, to be directed by Daphne Schmon. The psychological thriller will also feature Mark Rowley, as per the Hollywood trade website Deadline. *The Eye* has a screenplay by Emily Carlton. The cast also includes Anna Savva, Linda Marlowe, and Christos Stergioglou. She will be next seen in filmmaker Prashanth Neel's upcoming directorial *Salaar*, along with actors Prabhas and Prithviraj Sukumaran. The movie will release across India in five languages. Besides Prabhas, Prithviraj, and Shruti, the movie also has Jagapathi Babu, Easwari Rao, and Sriya Reddy in key roles. *Salazar* is all set to hit the theatres in 2023.



MAGAZINE KING

WHEN SHAH RUKH KHAN SAID HIS CHILDREN WERE 'BETTER HUMAN BEINGS' THAN HIM: 'THANK GOD FOR THAT'

Shah Rukh Khan is a doting father to his three kids Aryan Khan, Suhana Khan and AbRam Khan. The elder two are already gearing up for their debut next year. The actor, who is also gearing for his comeback film *Pathaan*, had once said that his kids are better human beings than him. He had also said that he neither ever asked them to become actors nor engineers. Aryan Khan is all set to direct a web series. He has written it as well and will be making his debut from behind the camera. Suhana Khan has opted to follow in

the footsteps of her father and will be seen as one of the lead actors in Zoya Akhtar's film, *The Archies*.

Shah Rukh had once opened up about his similarity and dissimilarities with his children. He had said during an event at Kidzania in 2014, "None of my children have my habits. I thank god for that. They are good kids. The only commonality between Suhana, AbRam and me is that we get dimples. They are much better human beings than I am."

Talking about how he always allowed them to pursue their own dreams, he had said, "They should do whatever makes them happy and be healthy. I never ask my children to become an actor, engineer. They can be whatever they wish to be." Shah Rukh will now be returning to the silver screen after four years. He plays the titular role in *Pathaan*, which is his fourth film opposite Deepika Padukone after *Om Shanti Om*, *Chennai Express* and *Happy New Year*. Directed by Siddharth Anand, the film has John Abraham in the role of the antagonist. It is set to release in theatres on January 25 next year. The first song from the film *Besharam Rang* is already a hit. Another song *Jhoom Jo Pathaan* is scheduled to release on Thursday.

Shah Rukh Khan had once talked about what he has in common with his children. He has two sons Aryan Khan and AbRam Khan and a daughter Suhana Khan.



CIRKUS ISN'T 'GOING TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE', SAYS ROHIT SHETTY: 'IT'S GOING TO GIVE YOU...'

Filmmaker Rohit Shetty has spoken about his upcoming directorial Cirkus and called it a 'timepass' film that won't change a person's life. In a new interview, Rohit said that after watching the movie once, a person would want to watch 'this film again with your friends'. Fronted by Ranveer Singh and Varun Sharma, Cirkus is based on William Shakespeare's classic play The Comedy of Errors. It is slated to hit the screens on December 23. Cirkus also stars Pooja Hegde and Jacqueline Fernandez in lead roles.

Speaking with Pinkvilla, Rohit said, "It's a simple film I tell you. You come with your family, have a great time. You come out and I can challenge you if anyone asks how the film is. You will say 'mast hai, timepass hai, jaake dekh (it's fun, it's a timepass, go and watch it)'. I will not say more than this about the film."

Rohit Shetty has called Cirkus a 'timepass' film. He added that the Ranveer Singh and Varun Sharma movie isn't 'going to change your life'.

He also added, "The film is like this. I will not say that it is going to change your life. No, it's going to give you happiness. And you will like watching this film again with your friends. You will say that I want to watch this scene again. This is that kind of film. It's All The Best and Golmaal." Earlier, Rohit while speaking at the unveiling of the December issue of the Society Achievers Magazine had said, as reported by news agency PTI, "Cirkus is for the audience who loved Golmaal and All The Best. It's that kind of a film. This is for all those who loved those films. I'm sure they're going to love it because I've watched the film. When we started off, I was just a filmmaker making films. Then, the kind of love I got from the audience, it became their film. So, I now make films for them, I take it as a responsibility."

Rohit is known for action comedies such as the Golmaal franchise and All The Best: Fun Begins. He has also helmed action dramas such as the Singham series. He debuted as a director in 2003 with the Ajay Devgn-starrer Zameen. Rohit has also helmed films such as Bol Bachchan, Chennai Express, Dilwale, Simmba, and Sooryavanshi among many others.



SONAM KAPOOR ON WHY SHE PICKED ANAND AHUJA AS HUSBAND: 'I AM GIVING MOM CREDIT...'

Sonam Kapoor recently gave a shout-out to her mother Sunita Kapoor on social media. The actor gave her mom the credit for playing a key role in her decision to marry Anand Ahuja. She also praised her father Anil Kapoor. Sonam Kapoor and Anand Ahuja married in 2018. On Tuesday, the actor spoke about why she 'picked' Anand to be her husband. Sonam took to Instagram Stories to re-share a post dedicated to fathers, and gave a shout out to her mom Sunita Kapoor for 'picking right' by marrying Anil Kapoor. Sonam, also shared how her mother played a role in her and sister, producer-stylist Rhea Kapoor, picking their life partners. Sonam tagged father-actor Anil Kapoor, and wrote along with a post about the impact of dads on their daughters, "That's why Rhea Kapoor

and I picked Anand Ahuja and Karan Boolani, because Sunita Kapoor picked right. I am giving mom credit..."

The original post that Sonam Kapoor had shared, read, "Dads: Your daughter notices when you hold your wife's hand or when you gently put your hand in the small of your wife's back. Your daughter sees when you listen (or not) to your wife, while she is talking. She also sees you staring at your phone, ignoring the world around you. Your daughter is learning from you how she should expect to be talked to, talked about, honoured and cared for and loved. Your daughter is watching every single thing you do. Raise your game." While Sonam and Anand married in a lavish ceremony in Mumbai on May 8, 2018, Rhea and

filmmaker Karan Boolani had an intimate wedding on August 14, last year. While Rhea's wedding ceremony at Anil Kapoor's Mumbai bungalow was attended only by close friends and family members, Sonam's wedding with Anand was a grand affair with various pre-wedding and post-wedding functions spread over a couple of days. Sonam and Anand welcomed their first child together – son Vayu Kapoor Ahuja – on August 20, this year. The actor had recently taken to Instagram Stories to share details of her delivery, and her post-natal journey since Vayu's birth. The actor had said that she had a 'quick birth', and has been 'breastfeeding easily'. The new mom also shared the steps she took to ensure she had no stretch marks.



Divya Dutta: Earlier people thought female directors only worked on art films, Farah Khan, Zoya Akhtar changed it

Actor Divya Dutta talked about her upcoming films, working with female directors, shared an anecdote with Gulzar and exploring Shimla undercover.

Actor Divya Dutta is focusing on good health and work as she prepares to welcome the new year. With multiple films lined up, she tells Hindustan Times, “I am glad that things which I didn’t plan happened and it worked out. With two hits, all of my films were very distinctively different from each other. They have been liked and I would say it’s a blessing.” “I have another blessing this year, my house. A new address, which is beautiful and whoever comes, they like it. More than anyone I love it here. This is the kind of house I would have wanted for myself.” The actor doesn’t believe in new year’s resolutions as she thinks it is overhyped.

Divya Dutta is ready to dive into 2023 with two untitled web shows and a Dibakar Banerjee film where she is playing a copy. She also has *Sharmaji Ki Beti*, which marks the directorial debut of author Tahira Kashyap who is also actor Ayushmann Khurrana’s wife.

Talking about working with Tahira, Divya dubbed their work as a ‘sweet film.’ “Tahira is someone who is full of life. When she is on the set, everyone

becomes happy, it’s like a picnic. But once she says ‘action’ it’s a metamorphosis. She just wants the job done. Her positivity gets on to you very much,” added the actor who calls her director ‘a beautiful influence.’ Divya in her career, spanning decades, worked with many female directors, ranging from Pamela Rooks to Tanuja Chandra. Ask her about how it feels to work on a project with a female perspective, and she explains, “It’s a good director and a bad director. Of course, with a female director, there’s a female sensibility and it depends on what subject you are dealing with. Pehle kaha jata tha female directors sirf art films banati hain. Now it has changed. It cannot be categorised. I feel gradually this has broken with Farah Khan, Zoya Akhtar and now Tahira coming in. So many young people are now coming up who understand the audience. It’s delightful.”

Recently Divya broke her shoes during an event where she was appearing as a moderator. Who came to her rescue was lyricist Gulzar who cheered her up with a poem, apt for the situation. So, what really happened? Divya recalls, “I was embarrassed. Felt like Cinderella who broke her shoes. Gulzar sahab was across the room, sitting and looking very calmly. He came and

recited a poem which totally matched my situation. It was so beautiful. I felt like I could walk even barefoot after listening to him. I think that the power of magical words coming from a legend like him lightened up the situation for me.” Divya was recently in Shimla for a shoot. In between the shoot, she made most of her breaks by exploring the place, amid the local crowd but in a camouflaged avatar. She shares her experience, “I looked like Daaku Mangal Singh with a face mask, muffler and a coat. I think people used to recognise me only when I spoke. I used to run away by the time they recognised my voice. But, I also had my team around.” “There was a buzz that I was around but I beautifully camouflaged myself. It was lovely to just sit around the bench and hear people talk about their daily life. It felt very normal,” she adds. Many times, celebrities have made public appearances in secret and gone unnoticed. Other times, they do it for promotions. But, Divya clarified hers was just for rejuvenation and no publicity gimmick. “But, no one could catch me, so mine wasn’t public. For me, the happiness of my soul matters. I should do what makes me happy. Of course, people around me are important but that isn’t the point.”



‘We struggle with fears everyday’

‘From the moment we get up, we fear something or the other.’

Kajol has been quite frank about how she **faced her fears** before signing Revathi's touching film **Salaam Venky**.

“Bravery is about not being scared,” “it is about what you need to do despite being scared and that's what I did with Salaam Venky.”

How do you deal with the fears in your life?

I think we struggle with fears everyday.

From the moment we get up, we fear something or the other. But the whole point of our lives and growing up and maturity is that you have to work despite the fear.

That's what bravery is about, right?

Bravery is about not being scared, it is about what you need to do despite being scared and that's what I did with Salaam Venky.

I did the film despite the fact that I was scared.

I was scared about whether I would be able to do this film or not.

I was scared whether I would come on set and cry an ocean of tears and then just walk away and say, 'Enough, I can't shoot this.'

Yes, that could have happened.

You have to do the things that, I wouldn't say, make you happy but at least keep you satisfied.

Your viral video of bonding with Kamal Sadanah, your first co-star, was nice to see.

We have met during these 30 years at events and functions; it's not that I haven't met him.

I know what is happening in his life. He knows what is happening in my life.

But to see somebody on set after so long, just the timing of it -- that you have done your first film with him and now I am completing 30 years and coming back with him in Salaam Venky was amazing.

It was surreal.

What about working with Aamir Khan?

Aamir Khan was, as usual, amazing to work with.

We are working together after Fanaa.

We keep meeting somewhere or the other.

There's also the fact that I really respect Aamir because the one thing that is there from all his films is that he has managed to keep his interest, his enthusiasm and his 'perfectionism' intact.

If you had a solution to anxiety, what would it look like?

There is no solution to anxiety.

People, who have anxiety, should look deep into themselves and figure out what makes them anxious.

Rather than taking tablets, they should look inside and find out why they are anxious and fix that.

'From the moment we get up, we fear something or the other.'

It takes guts to fix that.

Nowadays, biopics are made on people who are alive. Your character in this film is based on someone who is still alive. Does it make it difficult or easier?

I would say the responsibility is more, especially when they are not a public figure and they are alive.

That is a responsibility on your end because if I have to live with this film and I have to live with my work and my character, she has to live with it much more because it's her that I am playing.

She has to look at it and say, 'Okay'.

So yes, there is that responsibility and at no point do I want to go away from who she is.

I have met her.

I know what she is like and I know that she is not a big character.

When we build a character, we always say that it becomes much

more unmistakable. You can't really get it very wrong.

But the quieter the character, the simpler the character, the more difficult it is to portray her essence.

I have tried very hard to do that and remain true to her as much as possible.

Do you feel the jitters when a film is about to release even after spending 30 years in the business?

You know, honestly, I don't.

That may make me sound terrible, but yes, I hope for the best.

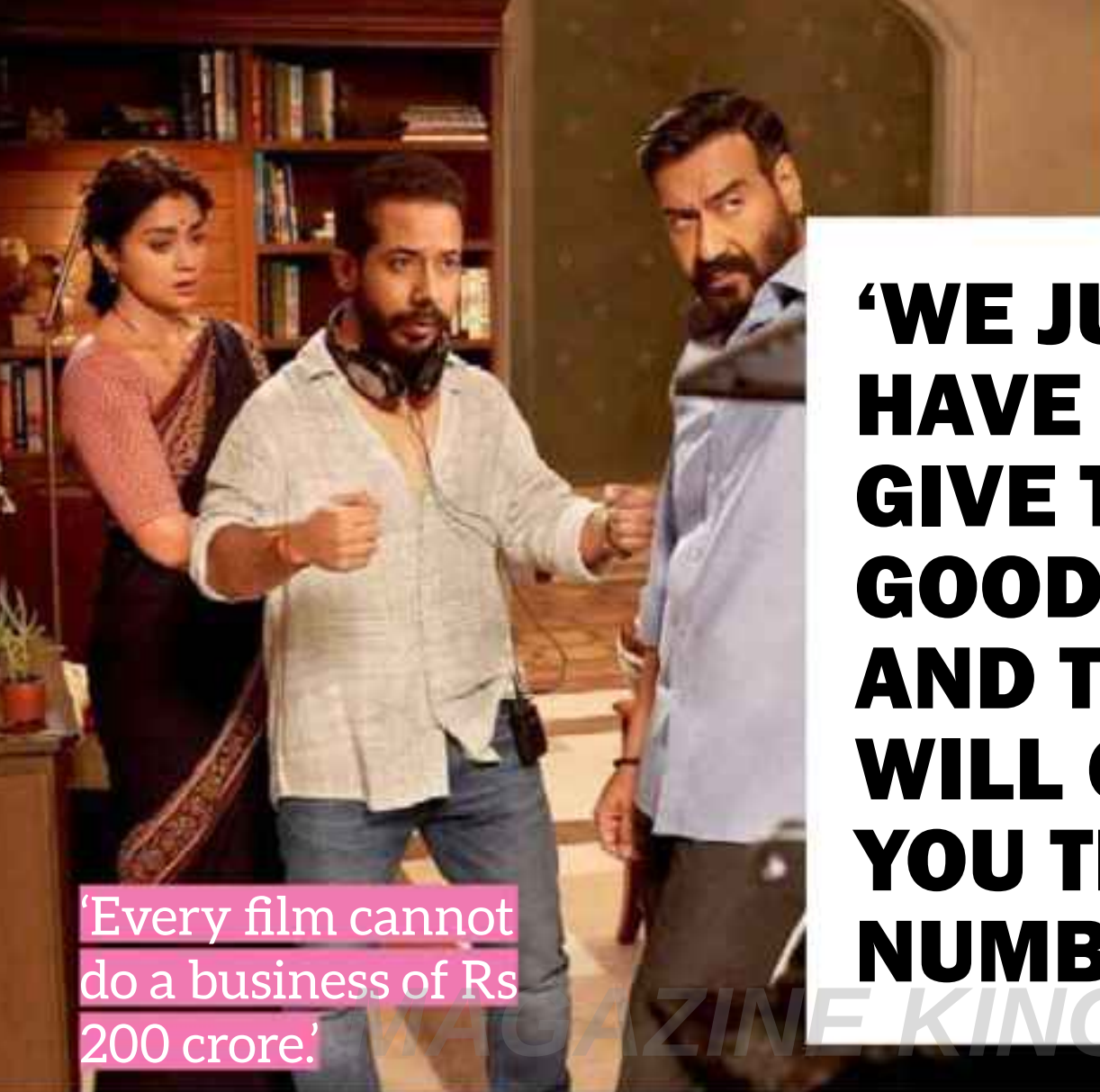
I pray for the best and I really, really hope and pray that everybody goes and watches the film and it gets these fantastic numbers and reviews.

I have given more than 300 percent to the film and it's my honesty to myself.

If I can face myself in the mirror tomorrow and ask, 'Have you worked the hardest? Have you done your bit? Have you done the interviews?' Yes, I have.

You have to give your 100 percent while working on the film, that's the only thing that you can do.





‘WE JUST HAVE TO GIVE THEM A GOOD FILM AND THEY WILL GIVE YOU THE NUMBERS’

‘Every film cannot do a business of Rs 200 crore.’

Abhishek Pathak started out as a production assistant at 17, studied film-making at the New York Film Academy; at 21, he made a short film, Boond, which won the National Award; flagged off the superhit Pyaar Ka PUNCHNAME franchise, along with Khuda Haafiz, as a producer. He is now winning raves for directing Drishyam 2, which has grossed over Rs 200 crore (Rs 2 billion) at the box office and brought huge cheer in a drought year for Hindi films.

Abhishek reveals how he came to direct Drishyam 2 after Nishikant Kamat, who directed Drishyam, died.

“ I had a certain vision for the film when I bought the rights and didn’t want it to get lost in translation, so I stepped up.”

A double century and counting. Feels good?

It does. The audience is loving Drishyam 2; they are coming to the theatres to watch it. It’s a big achievement!

Despite the pre-release anticipation, did you expect such an overwhelming response?

Yes. That’s why we held on to all the rights, including the global theatrical rights.

Yash Raj Films only distributed the film for us in the international market, and we partnered with them in India, because we were confident of the numbers.

This despite the Malayalam original being available on OTT at the press of a button?

What you can watch on Amazon Prime is not a dubbed Hindi version but the Malayalam original with English subtitles.

There is a really small section of the audience in India who will watch a regional film with English subtitles.

Living in a metro city like Mumbai or Delhi, we assume that everyone reads English but actually 90 per cent of our population speaks only Hindi.

Having lived Vijay Salgaonkar’s journey, we knew they would want to know what happens to his family and him, and not be interested in seeing Georgekutty’s story.

Given how well the film is doing, will the Hindi Drishyam 3 come out before the Malayalam one?

We will first have to crack an idea, then decide if we want to collaborate with the South makers or go the distance alone.

For now, we are happy living the success of Drishyam 2.

How did you come to direct Drishyam 2?

I wasn't planning to.

But after losing Nishi sir (Nishikant Kamat, who directed Drishyam), when I was wondering who could direct Part 2, dad (producer-distributor Kumar Mangat Pathak) and my friend Luv (writer, producer, director Luv Ranjan) pushed me into picking up the reins.

When I demurred, they pointed out that this is my world and the thriller is a genre I like best.

I had a certain vision for the film when I bought the rights and didn't want it to get

You have known Ajay Devgn for a long time now. What is he like as an actor and a person?

Ajay sir is one of the most professional artists I have met, always punctual, very down-to-earth and humble, a family man.

He understands the character better than even the writer.

He only has to read the script to get the body language and tonality right.

And Tabu?

the skin of the character.

He was so involved, had so many questions about his character's back story.

He wanted to know if IG Tarun Ahlawat was married, had children -- even though there is no reference to his family in the screenplay -- just to get a better understanding of his character.

Will the success of Drishyam 2 bring on additional pressure?

No, every film cannot do a business of Rs 200 crore.



lost in translation, so I stepped up.

For me, that moment of deciding whether to direct it myself or not will always be an important part of Drishyam 2.

I was very clear I would need a couple of months to rewrite the original as we are not catering to the same audience.

The story is the same, but the screenplay, the treatment and the performances are very different.

Sweet, nice, humble, talented, she lives the role of Meera Deshmukh.

You had a new entrant in Drishyam 2, Akshaye Khanna.

It was an author-backed role, written with him in mind.

We met him for a narration. He read the screenplay and the same evening, called to say he was doing the film.

Another fab actor who gets under

The idea should not be to make a film that runs, but one that people would want to see.

It's wrong to say they (audiences) are no longer interested in coming to the theatres. If they can go for lunches and dinners, and to malls, why will they not come to watch a film?

We just have to give them a good film and they will give you the numbers.



‘DOWNFALL WAS WRITTEN FOR ME’

‘I regret not showing my grandparents the man I am today.’

basic amenities that we will never know what it feels like to fight for survival.

When Madhur came with this character, I thought it was a huge responsibility to represent this community.

I had to do it the right way.

I had to do justice to the role because we saw these people on the news and heard about the hardships they went through during the lockdown.

We saw shocking images of them walking all the way from Mumbai to Bihar, wearing shoes made out of plastic bottles and what not.

We have tried to recreate those things in the movie to show the depth of their struggle.

The hardest part was to shoot, to know in detail what these people went through.

It was extremely humbling and heartbreaking to feel what this community went through. So yeah, that was challenging.

Also, the fact that my mother (Smita Patil) has portrayed such rural characters in her career, I thought if I could leave no stone unturned in my performance, then people would see a

glimpse of my mother’s body of work in this character.

How did you prepare for this role?

Mr Bhandarkar and I met some migrant workers in Ghatkopar (north east Mumbai) before shooting.

I observed their language, mannerisms and how they spoke to each other.

How they lived their everyday life.

I kept observing them even while we were shooting.

How they walk, what makes them laugh, what makes them angry, all those little details.

I was also given reference films to watch and few of them were my mother’s films, including Chakra.

I also watched Aakrosh for Om Puri’s character and all of that really helped me.

Madhur Bhandarkar believed I could play this character even though many were against it and I thought I couldn’t.

Being an urban Bandra boy, I think a lot of people were apprehensive, but not Mr Bhandarkar.

He was extremely confident, and I am grateful that he gave me this chance.

Prateik Babbar has often experimented with his film roles but in Madhur Bhandarkar’s India Lockdown, audiences get to see a completely different side of the 36 year old as an actor.

Talking about playing a migrant worker named Madhav, “The fact that my mother (Smita Patil) has portrayed such rural characters in her career, I thought if I could leave no stone unturned in my performance, then people would see a glimpse of my mother’s body of work in this character.”

How challenging was it to play a migrant worker, who is stuck in the lockdown?

Oh, it was definitely a challenge because the role is so far from my comfort zone, so different from the urban person that I am.

To shed the urbanism, we had to work hard.

But I was immediately invested in the story and the character after my first meeting with Madhur Bhandarkar.

We are so blessed to have even the

How was the atmosphere on sets because it is a serious film with a lot of emotions involved?

If you look at Madhur Bhandarkar's filmography, he's known to make hard-hitting films with immense shock value.

So I am sure people feel that a person who makes such content must be very serious and a taskmaster in real life too.

But he's the complete opposite. He's a comic!

It was so difficult to keep a straight face because Madhur was always in good spirits, pulling pranks and cracking jokes.

He has his lingo which is funny. He's literally the opposite from the kind of work he does.

What is your take away from this film?

I feel extremely humble that I got to live the character of Madhav in whatever small way through this film and got to experience the angst of this community.

My takeaway is simply that I have utmost respect for what these people went through.

I am grateful to have a roof over my head, food to eat and just be alive.

We have all realised that the human spirit was tested and we came out stronger.

We saw the darkness together and now, we are seeing the light.

How did the lockdown affect you?

I think it affected us all in the same way.

We were all confused and restless.

I made sure I worked out every day and did house chores to make myself feel grounded. In introspect, I did enjoy 'Me' time.

I enjoyed sleeping because I had been very busy for two years before the lockdown.

**You have been in the industry for over
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a decade now. Has your journey gotten easier with time?

Oh no, it hasn't been easy and still is not.

There was slump in between that kind of hit the brakes in my career.

It's a hustle to stay in the industry, but the good part is that I am obsessed with being an actor.

I am absolutely obsessed with doing justice to my mother's legacy and that is my whole purpose of being in the industry.

It's hard to maintain yourself, your work and stay relevant.

But I love acting and hopefully, will achieve the superstardom that my mother did.



Do you have any regrets professionally?

Absolutely. But I think it was necessary; I think the downfall was written for me.

Coming to terms with who I am, where I stand and who my parents were, coming to terms with living a different life, a different childhood.

All those things were piling up and they finally exploded when I was about 25.

But as I said, it was necessary because it humbled me.

I regret being unprofessional at times, taking success for granted.

I regret taking opportunities for

granted.

Everyone has a journey and this was mine. It has made me what I am today.

And personally...

Personally, I am the kind of person who usually doesn't have regrets, but unfortunately, I do have a few.

I regret not having the opportunity to show my grandparents the man I am today.

I was battling with drug and alcohol addiction when they were alive.

They were struggling to see me deteriorating my life and destroying it.

That's something I regret immensely. I wish I could have been a better grandson.

What's next?

I have a film with Pratik Gandhi and Taapsee Pannu called Woh Ladki Hai Kahan. It's a romantic thriller, but also a comedy.

I play a very different character who is shy, basically a 'Yes' man as Taapsee's husband.

Then, I have a rom-com with Sayani Gupta. We just finished shooting it.

I will start shooting for the second season of Hiccups & Hookups.

Next year, I am doing a very special film, but I can't speak about it yet. The prep has already begun, so I am very excited.

What are you currently binge-watching on OTT?

The Crown.

Any film or a show you would recommend your fans to watch?

Definitely The Crown and The Last Film Show. It's a beautiful film.

Anything you saw recently and didn't like?

Many commercial films, but I wouldn't name them because most of them have my friends in it (laughs).

'IN A YEAR, TWO HINDI FILMS DID WELL'

'Options are just not working; people are not coming out.'

Ajay Bahl is happy with the response his latest film *Blurr* is getting on OTT.

"According to the changing times, OTT was the right way to go. It will have a longer shelf life there,"

What kind of response have you received for *Blurr*?

To be honest, when you do something that is slightly off-kilter and not the way thrillers are done, you get a polarised response.

It's bound to happen when you try to introduce something new to the audience.

But I am happy with the responses I am getting.

Why did the makers release the film on an OTT platform instead of in theatres?

You know what's going on, right?

Options are just not working; people are not coming out.

In a year, two films did well.

It might not be as expensive but it's still an expensive film.

So what happens is, when you are not really sure, two things happen.

If you release it (in theatres) and if the film doesn't work, your OTT price also goes down.

According to the changing times, OTT was the right way to go. It will have a longer shelf life there.



Blurr marks Taapsee Pannu's production debut. How did you become a part of this film?

Vishal Verma is one of the producers of the film, who had acquired the rights to the Spanish film Julia's Eyes.

Taapsee and I had been talking since Section 375 that we must do something together.

Vishal approached Taapsee first to be a part of it.

She saw the film and really liked it, so she came on board.

They had a list of directors they spoke about. Eventually, my name popped up and Taapsee said, 'Yeah, let's speak to Ajay.'

So Vishal met me, and I saw the film. Within a day, I was like, 'Let's do it.'

What challenges do you face as a film-maker when you Indianise a foreign film?

First of all, you don't want to lose the spirit of the original.

Julia's Eyes is the story of an urban couple.

With this kind of subject, I don't think we could have set it anywhere apart from the hilly terrain that it is already set in.



I did not want to lose out on the graphic elements of the original because that really appealed to me.

I thought this kind of urban couple in the wilderness would work best and also, it's not that culture dependent.

If you see the film, it has these seven characters in it, and you don't even get to know that what place it is.

You hardly see anybody else.

It's very insulated from the outside

world and I wanted to keep it like that.

What was the most challenging part of making Blurr?

It's a film where the protagonist goes through extreme emotions, one after the other. There's so much going on in her life.

It's a thriller. You cannot stop and then suddenly get into a place of drama.

You have to get that balance right.

Keep things moving, and yet, give a sense of what is happening internally to the character. That was a challenge for Taapsee as well as for me. Especially when she is blindfolded and has to work with body language only.



FARHAN AKHTAR AND SHIBANI ON THEIR FIRST CHRISTMAS AFTER MARRIAGE: IT FELT PERMANENT FROM THE THIRD DATE

Farhan Akhtar and Shibani Dandekar pose for HT City as they celebrate their first Christmas after getting married this year

He's ready on time, she takes a teensy bit longer. As we enter the sprawling Mumbai house of actors Farhan Akhtar and Shibani Dandekar, we are greeted by Tyson and Jimmy, who take their time in warming up to us, unlike their pet parents. The two soon complete a year of getting married (February 21) and celebrate their first Christmas together. and much like the warm, intimate vibes their wedding had, they prefer their Christmas to be that too. Excerpts from an exclusive chat with the much-in-love couple over a hot cup of Joe, right beside their Xmas tree and furbabies:

First Christmas after getting married, any special plans?

Farhan: We will go for lunch at her sister's (Anusha) house, and then for a lunch at my mom and sister's (Honey Irani and Zoya Akhtar). Just family time.

Do you remember your first-ever Christmas together?

Farhan: Tell him, when Santa came and left me under the Christmas tree for you!

Shibani: It was very memorable. We had a Christmas dinner with his huge group of 30-35 friends.

MAGAZINE KING



Do you two remember the first time you met? How did it all begin?

Farhan: I met Shibani on a show I was hosting, and she was a contestant. It was a very formal introduction of two people working together. But over a period of time, we sporadically stayed in touch on Facebook and Instagram. This was in 2015. I don't think we sparked any kind of friendship until 2017. It was very gradual, not instant. It took us a while to know each other and become friends. We had no clue about each other.

Shibani: We hadn't even met in social circles before, we had just heard about each other.

And as you started talking, what was your first impression of the other person?

Shibani: I thought he was an introvert, very quiet. That can also be misunderstood as maybe a little snooty. But it is absolutely not that because once you get to know him, you understand he is reserved, and not somebody who can just have a full-flowing conversation with anybody. It takes him a lot of time.

Farhan: You mean socially awkward, that's true. She can answer on my behalf, she knows what I felt about her when I met her. Please tell them, darling!

Shibani: Absolutely incredible, sparkling personality, worldly-wise...

Farhan: (cuts in) He is asking what did I think about you, not the other way round (laughs) I was struck by this very cool, laid-back attitude that Shibani had. A very easy demeanor, which to me was very attractive and interesting. When we spent time with each other, her cool, warm attitude was so far removed... I found that very different. You seem like an extrovert, and Farhan the opposite. A classic case of opposites attracting, isn't it?

Shibani: We are very different in terms of our personalities, but over time we discovered we had so much in common. We are both homebodies, love to go to the

gym, and love the arts. We express ourselves differently. Who forgets the important dates?

Shibani: I don't think none of us do, and he's not allowed to! I actually have our wedding date tattooed on my arm (shows us the tattoo)

What was that point when you decided this is the right time to take the plunge?

Farhan: It felt right. But she wasn't prepared for it, me asking her!

Shibani: We always knew on some level, also with the way our relationship happened, that there was never any 'lets the date and see where this is going' From maybe the third-fourth date, it felt it was permanent, without having a discussion of where are we headed. Although I wasn't really thinking about marriage, or that I would have any relationship after this one, we always knew this is it. In my head, the commitment was there. When he asked me for marriage, I was pleasantly taken aback.

When you were dating, you were constantly asked the wedding question. Did that put any kind of pressure on you, or speed up things?

Farhan: Not at all. The chatter discussion, debate, noise, whatever you want to call it, around you is a part and parcel which comes with what you do. In all fairness, there is a majority of people out there, who because of your work, are invested in you. When they see that you're in a happy place, they want something which is good for you. When they ask you when they hear wedding bells, it is coming from a good place. But it does not pressure. At no point did it compel me to do something earlier than I would have. Shibani: We don't operate that way either. We aren't affected by things that we are supposed to do. If we want to get married we will, if not then we won't.

Farhan: It's too late for that now!

Social media can be a nasty place. How do you not let the negativity there affect your relationship, how do you isolate it from that?

Shibani: By doing just that, isolating. On some level, when you are putting things out there, especially about your private life, you make that choice. You cannot expect everybody to just say nice things, we don't live in that world anymore. What you allow to affect you, is in your control. I read nasty comments about myself and my relationship all the time. It doesn't define or affect my relationship. Is there anything you would want to change about each other?

Farhan: I don't actually.

Shibani: You are saying I am perfect?

Farhan: No. I know it's Christmas time, but let's not push it that far also! (laughs) She is perfect for me, me, as she is. There is nothing I would change because the reason I love her is I want to be with her exactly the way she is.

Shibani: There is one thing, which cancels itself out. He is not at all a multitasker...

Farhan: No one would believe you! (laughs)

Shibani: I know he's an actor, director, writer, and singer, but he cannot multitask. My mom said that's why he has a such incredible focus on the things he does. If he is busy doing something and I try to talk to him, he won't look. It is frustrating, why can't he just look up and answer my question? On the flip side, he has the ability to focus on something and block the entire world out. I can't do that. It's the reason that makes him, him.



THE MOST POPULAR WEB SERIES OF 2022

IMDb unveiled its list of the 10 Most Popular Indian Web Series, based on page views on the site.

All the Web series listed here have been released between January 1 and November 7, 2022, and have an average IMDb user rating of 7 or higher, with at least 10,000 votes.



10. College Romance

Where to watch: SonyLIV

College Romance, in its third season, is a popular rom-com among the youth.

In just five episodes, love and friendships are tested amidst scandals and long-distance relationships.



9. Campus Diaries

Where to watch: MX Player

Yet another college rom-com, Campus Diaries tells coming-of-age stories of six students at Excel University.

Young actors take centre stage here, and make the show relatable among the youth.



8. Abhay

Where to watch: ZEE5

Season 3 of Abhay continues to follow SP Abhay Pratap Singh (played by Kunal Kemmu) as he battles personal demons and solves gruesome crimes.

The antagonists are just as impactful as Kemmu, and Vijay Raaz -- playing a charismatic cult leader planning a mass murder -- gets it just right in the third season.



7. NCR Days

Where to watch: YouTube

Yet another college show, NCR Days is the story of Monu (Nikhil Vijay), who comes to NCR from Jodhpur to pursue an MBA degree so that he can marry his girlfriend back home.

He makes new friends and learns some hard lessons in the process.



6. Gullak

Where to watch: SonyLIV

In the third season of Gullak, the middle-class Mishra family of Jameel Khan, Geetanjali Kulkarni, Vaibhav Raj Gupta and Harsh Mayar continues to charm us.

The show has heart-warming stories and stellar performances.



5. Apharan

Where to watch: Voot and ALT Balaji

Apharan 2 is a wickedly funny crime thriller.

The 11-episode show revolves around cop Rudra Srivastava (Arunoday Singh), who is recruited by R&AW for a covert operation in Siberia.



4. Human

Where to watch:
Disney+Hotstar

Shefali Shah, playing a ruthless pharma boss, shines in the medical thriller.

Directed by her husband Vipul Amrutlal Shah as well as Moez Singh, the series also stars Kriti Kulhari and **Vishal Jethwa**, who made everyone cry in Salaam Venky.



3. Rocket Boys

Where to watch: SonyLIV

Based on the lives of legendary scientists Dr Homi J Bhabha and Dr Vikram Sarabhai, Rocket Boys takes a peek into India's formative years in atomic energy and space.

Jim Sarbh and Ishwak Singh's camaraderie translates well on screen.

Oh, and Hrithik Roshan's girlfriend Saba Azad stars too.



2. Delhi Crime

Where to watch: Netflix

While the first season of the Emmy-winning show Delhi Crime was based on the Nirbhaya case, the second season focuses on the kachha-baniyan gang that ran riot in several parts of the country in the 1990s.

The brilliant Shefali Shah leads the cast, and shows everyone why we need to see her more often.



1. Panchayat

Where to watch: Amazon Prime Video

The first season of Panchayat was brilliant, and the second season even better.

The story takes us back to Phulera as Panchayat Secretary Abhishek Tripathi continues to struggle between his work dilemmas and his ever changing equations with people in the village.



Nakuul Mehta on quitting Bade Achhe Lagte Hain 2: It was the right time to go

Nakuul Mehta confirms he is quitting his hit TV show *Bade Achhe Lagte Hain 2* after a year and a half; says he "will miss playing Ram".

Though quitting is not a word Nakuul Mehta would like to use, for him, his journey with *Bade Achhe Lagte Hain 2* has come to an end. After a year and a half on the show which has "been a satisfying, enriching and fulfilling journey", he says, he feels ready to go. Nakuul explains, "The show got a lot of love though many people had doubts when we started as because we took on an iconic show (and remade it). But for it to have the journey and reach out to people the way it has, I think has been truly special. I feel creative, and full having been a part of it for so long. The story is going to places and I feel going ahead there's nothing new I can

bring to it. I will miss playing Ram."

The actor, who has done three TV shows in his 10-year-old career, admits that post his last TV show, *Ishqbaaz*, he was exhausted and that's why took a four-year break. Nakuul shares, "I feel I have paid my dues to the makers and the audiences in the last 18 months. Moreover, you must know when to go and now is the time to go. It is tempting to stay on and continue with a show and receive the love but what more is my question? I look at challenging myself. I have had patience and resilience to say no to a lot of things and preserve myself for bigger things." Nakuul states he doesn't do too many shows as it is an injustice to play different roles every few months when the audience is so invested in your TV characters.

"Once an audience buys into you for playing a Shivay or Ram, I feel it's an injustice to take up another character in two months and say, 'Now accept me as this (character)'. Now I work for credibility and respect. Today, you could be a star on television or film, but all of us are in the business of wanting to borrow the viewers' time. And I don't take that for granted. For me, I need to go back live life again and return to the sets as on set you only summarize life. That helps me bring new things to my audience so that I can sort of give them something new and the credibility of wanting to sample my next project continues. That's kind of hard to earn in this industry is what I've learned along the way."



‘LUCK IS A PRIVILEGE TOO’

‘I did not have the privilege of someone holding my hand and guiding me. I had to chart my own journey.’

Avinash Tiwary is receiving raves for his wily politician act in the gritty Web series, *Khakee: The Bihar Chapter*.

The series, made by Neeraj Pandey and Bhav Dhulia, is getting **good reviews**, and Avinash says “A lot of love is coming my way and to be honest, I did not expect it.”

Khakee: The Bihar Chapter has been well received by critics and audiences.

A lot of love is coming my way and to be honest, I did not expect it.

The show is trending not only in India, but all over the world.

We are really happy that our regional, local story could reach out to the world.

People from the Hindi belt of UP (Uttar

Pradesh) and Bihar -- I am also from Bihar, by the way -- have caught on to the nuances, and they are so excited and joyful.

I have been doing other films and projects, but this kind of response is something I have not seen before.

I am really pleased, very honestly, for all the efforts put in by the team, especially Bhav Dhulia, the director, who held my hand and navigated me through this, and Neeraj Pandey, who has been the guiding light for all of us.

As you said, the story is set in a particular region of the country but still touches millions globally. What makes it so relatable?

I think what’s beautiful about the story is that the core idea is good versus bad.

Thankfully, because of the amazing ensemble cast, we have been able to humanise every character in a very detailed manner.

When you are able to humanise it and make it very true to the milieu, it begins to connect with people because they have seen such people, and connected with them at some point.

I think they become very real for everyone.

In my limited understanding of films, I think that has really touched people.

The show looks so real, believable and relatable that the story becomes extremely engaging for the audience.

It depicts Bihar in its most authentic form.

What I think is also great here is to see state policing, which we rarely see in most films and shows about a fight between a cop and a thief.

We rarely get to see such detailed state policing.

Was it easy to play Chandan Mahto since you hail from that region of the country?

I mean, I understood the dialect and the politics of the show.

Yes, being from that area definitely helped me with those things, but creating Chandan was extremely difficult because he is so far removed from who I am in real life.



Neeraj sir and Bhav really helped me and pulled me through this journey, right from trying to understand how truck drivers are because he is a truck driver in the show.

I went to the shoot location 10 days in advance, and spent all my time in the dhabas nearby, where trucks would be parked. I would spend a lot of time with truck drivers.

I learnt how to drive the truck. I picked up the mannerisms and gestures by observing them, so that I could make my character as believable as possible.

What was your first thought when you read the script?

I was petrified when I read the script.

I was like, ‘Sir, do you want to do this? Will I be able to do this?’

Again, as I said, it was the faith shown by Neeraj Pandey and Bhav that really made me decide to jump in.

Apart from having an original story and screenplay, I think the film-makers excited me the most.

There could have been no better maker than Neeraj Pandey sir.

He really has a connection to the heartland, and he is able to understand the nuances.

What did you learn from him?

To keep things simple.

He is very clear about what he wants and how he tells his stories.

Whatever I have observed has really helped me let go of a lot of baggage that one carries as an actor.

I think it has freed me up more.

He has filled me up with an immense amount of confidence, love and appreciation.

And when it comes from a maker

like Neeraj Pandey, even if you doubt yourself, you move beyond it.

Who is your role model in Bollywood?

I can definitely say that I am thoroughly inspired by Priyanka Chopra.

She is someone who has been able to create a reach, right from India to the US.

Because of the amount of coverage that she has received and the fact that she is now a true global icon from our country, she is an inspiration to someone like me who aspires to reach the world.

I want to go and ensure that Indian content is seen worldwide.

What has been your most challenging role to date?

Laila Majnu was one of the most difficult parts.

I think Khakee would be second, but the one that is coming later is the most difficult because I gave it three years of my life. It is a very emotional part for me.

Do you feel your journey has been difficult since you do not have a godfather?

Yes, it’s bound to be, right?

I did not have the privilege of someone holding my hand and guiding me. I had to chart my own journey.

It would be more difficult than the others, but, you know, long ago I realised that luck is a privilege too.

People who complain about others’ privileges lose it, and I don’t see myself like that.

I am here to create my own journey and make my own privileges.

It has been a fruitful, wholesome, journey as of now, and I am assuming it will get better from here.



Akhilendra Mishra: Can't abuse on screen, so I chose to not do OTT shows



Actor Akhilendra Mishra has by choice restricted himself from taking a plunge into the OTT space. The Chandrakanta and Gangajal actor says he is not okay with the language and obscenity used in most of the series in the name of entertainment. "I am yet to make my debut on the web as I can't abuse on screen and be a part of the content that is obscene. One can easily count my films...they are at my fingertips whereas my counterparts have done 100s of projects. I have been very choosy. See, we work to earn and get popularity but as an actor, I also have my responsibility towards society as visual media leaves a huge impact," says the actor. However, is he positive about the changes that are slowly happening? "I am happy that some good family-oriented shows are being made. Also, probably makers have

realized the value of family content as there has been an overdose of violence, abuse, and obscene content."

Mishra has recently wrapped up the shooting of Neelesh Jain's directorial debut film tentatively titled PMT which was shot entirely in Barabanki, near Lucknow.

Actor Akhilendra Mishra has by choice restricted himself from taking a plunge into the OTT space

His last film released was Jhalki (2019) and of late his short film Barat was released.

"After the tough pandemic phase, I have done a couple of projects. I completed Shankar's Indian 2 with Kamal Haasan, Sushant Roy's Trojan, Abhay Pratap Singh's

Dedh Lakh Ka Dulha, Prateek Sharma's Lotus Bloom in the Maithili language, and my second Marathi film Surya," he says. The actor has completed three decades in the industry and is content with the quality of work he has done.

"Chandrakanta (1994) is like an Academy Award for me. I can win any award but the audience to date addresses me with Kroor Singh and my tagline Yakku. I feel blessed that I brought alive a fictional character and audiences across generations still remember me. I have played iconic roles like Ravan (Ramayan), Chandrashekar Azad (The Legend of Bhagat Singh), Mirchi Seth (Sarfaroosh), Amar Chowdhary (Ready), and Arjan Lohar (Lagaan) but the love I got for my TV show is phenomenal," he says while signing off.

‘LIFE WILL ALWAYS BE DIFFICULT

‘And it always should be.’



Amit Sial has been acting for close to two decades but gained attention for his role as the devil-may-care Devender Mishra in Amazon Prime Video’s Inside Edge. His resume also includes Mirzapur, Jamtara: Sabka Number Ayega, Maharani, Kathmandu Connection, and the recently released Qala.

The actor, who will be seen next in Kathmandu Connection S2, is now aiming to notch up leading roles.

“I am trying to wake up from the world that I have become comfortable in,”



“I had a certain vision for the film when I bought the rights and didn’t want it to get lost in translation, so I stepped up.”

The first season of Kathmandu Connection was well-received. Tell us something about season 2.

Season 2 is connected to the first season. There are some new entrants this time around, specifically Prashant Narayan who is one of my favorite actors.

There’s Harleen Sethi as well, who is amazing in the show.

And since the story moves forward from the first season, you will see some of those primary characters in season 2 as well. They will be reprising their roles in a new environment and in new surroundings.

Do you feel OTT has shaped the career of many actors like you who probably did not get the right opportunities in the movies?

Yes, of course.

And it’s not just actors; OTT has opened doors to more opportunities for every creative person, be it writers, directors or (film)makers.

See, the world of films is very small;

it does not have enough space for everybody.

OTT, on the other hand, is a much, much wider place. There is a lot of scope for all sorts of departments to get a break. It could be in film-making, it could be in acting, it could be in music, it could be in the direction.

OTT offers a larger space for people to play around in as compared to films. It has obviously opened doors for everybody.

How would you say OTT has contributed to your career?

It has contributed immensely.

I got my recognition with Inside Edge, which is an OTT show. I have done a few more shows on various OTT platforms.

It is not just me; a lot of other actors got their due on OTT. Some of them are now jumping into films now because now they have become known.

There is a huge amount of economics involved in creating something, be it films, TV shows or OTT shows. Producers and financiers need to have some kind of confidence when they invest their money on actors and technicians. I think OTT has given them that confidence.



What convinced you to leave your hometown, Kanpur, and come to Mumbai to become an actor?

All I wanted to do in life, even when I was a kid, was to become an actor.

But I never thought -- in fact, I never even dreamed -- that one day, I'd be living here in Mumbai and that my passion would become my source of livelihood.

I have always been happy, content, and relaxed in whatever I am doing; I live in the moment.

I just want to progress in life; I want to keep evolving. And I always jump at an opportunity when it presents itself.

After finishing school, I left Kanpur to join a college in Delhi. It was a new place; I was exposed to a new kind of life. I met new people -- people who were better than me. I learned a lot of new things from them.

That's where I bumped into Barry John. I worked with him for 3-4 years; I did theatre.

Then, I went to Melbourne. There was another set of life experiences waiting for me there.

I have been accumulating life

experiences and there came a time when I started thinking about how I would use those life experiences.

Now I am in Mumbai, working as a professional actor. And it is my life's journey that has made me the actor I am today.

Surviving in a city like Mumbai is not easy. How challenging was it for you?

Challenges are only presented by your inner self.

You have to overcome your insecurities and your fears. That is what life is all about.

You have to persevere; you have to go through the grind and be hopeful that, one day, all your experiences and all your learnings will come in handy.

If you are persistent enough, things do fall into place.

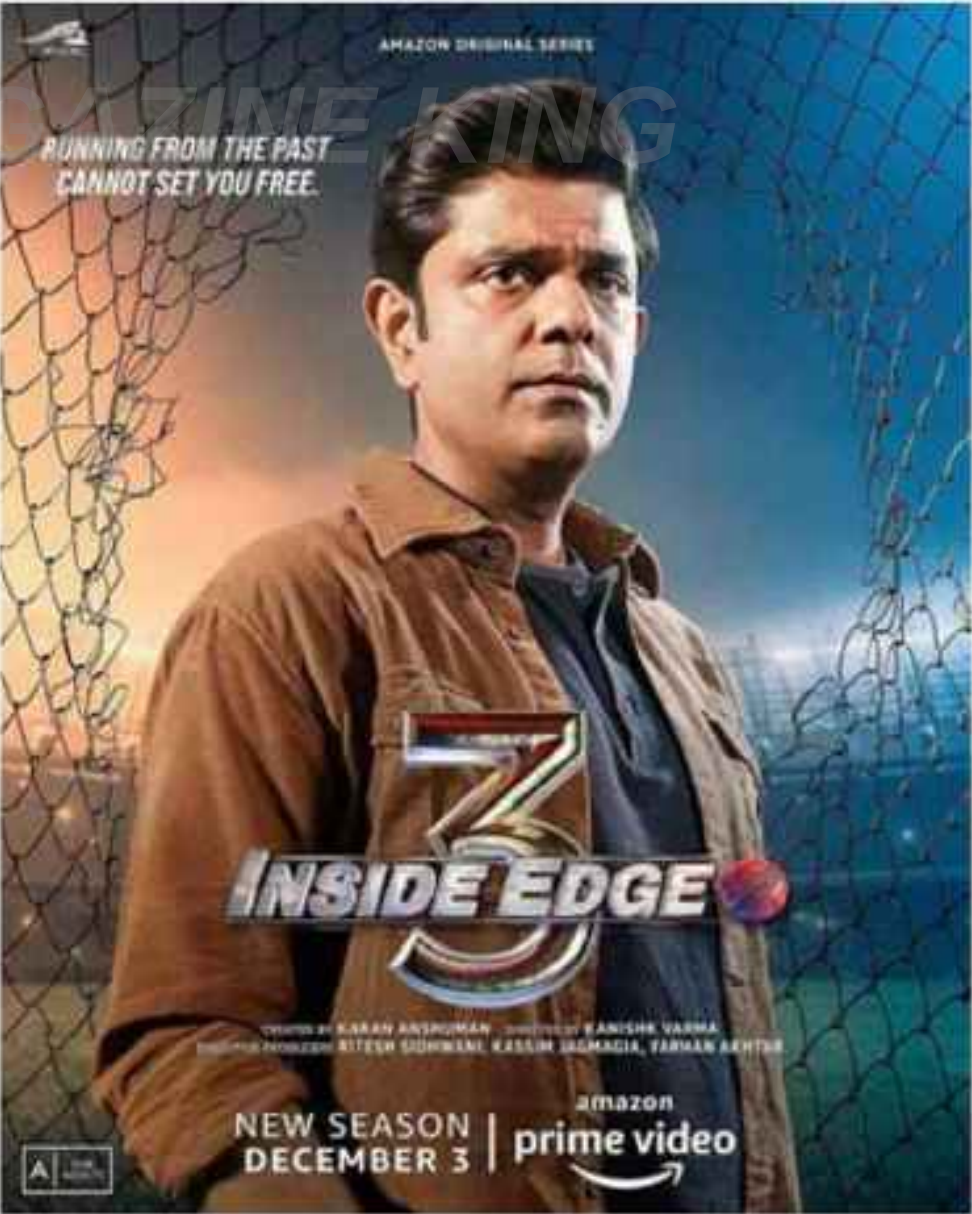
In a recent interview, Nawazuddin Siddiqui revealed how there was a time in his career when some people did not give him certain roles because of the colour of his skin. Have you ever been in a similar situation? Does such discrimination still exist?

Yeah, it does; it is bound to. And there are no wrongs and rights about it. It is what it is sometimes and you have to take it at face value.

But that does not stop anybody from striving hard and creating a niche for themselves.

Nawazuddin Siddiqui is a brilliant actor. And I am not just talking about the present; he has always been a brilliant actor. I have known him for ages.

When he got the opportunities, he made the best of them and see where he is now.



In an earlier interview, you said you want to headline projects. Are such opportunities coming your way?

Life is difficult. There is no question about that.

It will always be difficult and it always should be; I personally believe nothing should come easily to anyone because then there is no thrill in it.

As an actor, you should never be content.

If you are content with what you are doing, then there is no growth. You won't evolve.

But life happens to everybody at some point. It has happened to me.

And I want to do this for myself and not for anybody else.

Now, I am trying to wake up from the world that I have become comfortable in. And I am doing it for myself rather than for anybody else. I have done some things which are completely different from what I have been doing in the past. Hopefully, they will release it early next year.

What has been the turning point of your career?

Definitely Inside Edge. I got a lot of freedom in what I wanted to do with that character.

It was a beautiful experience and I thoroughly enjoyed working on the show. And because I thoroughly enjoyed myself in season 1, I did season 2.

People and critics noticed my work. As I said before, the opportunity presented itself and I made the most of it.

Is there any genre that you have not yet explored and want to?

Yeah, I really want to do some romantic roles.

I have been playing these intense parts for a long time now. I want to do comedies.

And I have done it in one of the projects set to release next year. So, while that hunger is somewhat satiated, I want to do more of it.

I would like to do lighter roles, common man's roles.

I am trying to get away from doing intense performances all the time. But people think I am more suited to them, so they keep offering me such roles. And I do not mind that at all.

At the same time, I would like to explore all genres. Any actor would.

On a lighter note, who would you like to romance on-screen?

I have no idea, man.

I do not have a dream list.

I feel we have so many beautiful actresses out there. Hopefully, one day, I will get to work with some of them.

It has to be a good story, helmed by a good director with a good team.

How has your friendship with Randeep Hooda stood the test of time?

It is still going pretty strong.

We are more than friends; we are like brothers. We have known each other for almost 25 years. We have seen each other's ups and downs in life and shared every important moment together.

It is a very strong bond. Hopefully, it will stay that way for the rest of our lives.

Why should the audience watch Kathmandu Connection 2?

We tried to make it more enthralling, more thrilling, and more entertaining.

It is a thriller, but it is also very dramatic. There are some great actors working in it.

It is an interesting entertainer. We have done what we had to. The ball is now in the audience's court. I hope they watch it and let us know what they think, so that we can create the next instalment.



Winter skincare: Five tips to incorporate in your daily routine for healthy skin

Although it is advised to follow a dermatologist-prescribed winter skincare routine to solve severe skin issues, here are some basic skincare tips that can work wonders for you





Along with the bright festivities, comes the unavoidable dryness of the winter season. Devouring hot cocoa, snuggling in blankets, and willfully choosing a sedentary lifestyle becomes a priority while the skincare routine goes for a toss. Consequently, cold winters result in a climate that dries out the skin and brings up many skincare concerns. Worry not, as we've got five easy tips for your daily routine. In order to maintain your winter skin glowing and youthful, it's time to switch to rich moisturisers and lip balms. Keep scrolling to take the confusion out of switching toward an ideal winter skincare routine.

Although it is advised to follow a dermatologist-prescribed winter skincare routine to solve severe skin issues, here are some basic skincare tips that can work wonders for you.

SWITCH TO A MOISTURISING AND GENTLE CLEANSER

In every skincare regimen, cleansing is undoubtedly the most crucial step. However, with the onset of winter, switch to a gentler cleanser to avoid excessive drying of the skin. Select products with a cream or balm base to help your skin remain moisturised while the dirt is removed. Our skin dries out in the winter because there is less moisture in the air. Use a hydrating cleanser to moisturise your skin during these circumstances and avoid any additional harm.

OPT FOR A HEAVIER MOISTURISER

Winter calls for richer or heavier products to efficiently lock in hydration, whereas the summer season was all about light gel-based moisturisers. It's time to switch to a moisturiser that is extremely moisturising. You might choose ingredients like Vitamin E and hyaluronic acid.

NEVER SKIP OUT ON A GOOD SPF

In spite of the fact that the sun might not be visible in the winter because of the hazy weather, you should still use sunscreen. Your skin can still be harmed by the sun's rays, which can lead to pigmentation, sunspots, and other skin problems. Applying sunscreen with a small amount of foundation will offer sunscreen protection to your makeup.

EXFOLIATION IS THE KEY

The skin becomes dry and develops a covering of dead skin cells during the colder months. Make sure to wash your skin daily and exfoliate it once or twice a week. You may get rid of the buildup of debris and dead skin cells on your skin by exfoliating it. Your skin will glow and your blood flow will be increased by the gentle massage.

COAT YOUR SKIN WITH HYDRATING BODY BUTTER

Invest in a rich, creamy body butter that includes shea butter and cocoa oils to hydrate your skin. To ensure proper skin penetration, apply the cream right after your shower.

YOGA AND PRANAYAMA MAY HELP EASE PANIC ATTACKS



An increase in the body's normal reaction to stress, fear, or excitement is what causes panic attacks. The body, the psyche, and one's general health can all be impacted by the symptoms of panic attacks. Negative thoughts and uncomfortable physical sensations, such as rapid heartbeat, perspiration, and heavy breathing, are frequently present during panic attacks. A person's quality of life can be negatively impacted by panic attacks, even if some people are more prone to them than others.

Despite the difficulties caused by panic attacks, there are strategies to control the symptoms and lessen worry. Yoga is a centuries-old discipline that can aid in reducing anxiety and controlling panic attack symptoms. Additionally, yoga can improve mindfulness, lessen anxiety, and help with stress management.

How Yoga can help with Panic Disorder?

There are various symptoms associated with anxiety and

panic like tightness, feelings of tension and pain sensitivity. Yoga asanas can help ease the physical discomfort that comes with anxiety and panic attacks. The practice works to lengthen, stretch and balance the muscles of the body. The asanas also assist in releasing stiffness and built-up muscle tension throughout the body. Additionally, by gradually modifying the posture of the body, asanas can also bring about a change in the mentality of a person. Yoga allows people to get to know their bodies. Therefore, if the teacher tells a student to "release the shoulder", for example, he/she becomes aware of the posture and gradually learns to release the tension from their body. As a result, they also become less anxious and panicked in their day-to-day lives as they become aware of the tensions and how to let them go.

Another form of supplementary medicine for the mind-body system that has been around for centuries is meditation, which can help calm the mind and induce deep relaxation. A person can concentrate their attention and clear their mind of disorganised thoughts that may be stressing

them out. As a result, both physical and emotional health are improved.

Pranayama Effect on Stress and Anxiety

One of the essential elements of yoga practice is pranayama, or the art of controlling breath. The breathing exercises and patterns known as pranayama involve deliberately timing one's inhalations, exhalations, and breath holds. According to research, pranayama might enhance the stress response by soothing the neurological system.

People breathe too quickly when they are nervous. Fast breathing causes the blood to have an excessive amount of oxygen and less relative carbon dioxide, which affects the blood's pH level. This may result in nausea, twitching muscles, irritation, dizziness, anxiety, and stress. The blood's pH level, however, returns to normal with calm, controlled breathing. This slows down the heart rate and calms the body and mind.



Baddha Konasana

How to do:

Sit on the floor with your legs stretched to the sides. Exhale while you bring the bottoms of your feet together.

Pull the feet toward the pelvis.

Drop your knees to the sides.

Continue to press your heels together while you take deep breaths.



Dhanurasana

How to do:

Lie face down on your mat with the arms by the sides.

Keep your knees hip-width apart as you bring your heels as close to your glutes as possible.

Grasp your ankles with the hands.

Inhale while simultaneously lifting the thighs, heels, head, and sternum away from the floor.

Pull your shoulders away from the ears and keep your shoulder blades against the back.

Hold the pose for 20 to 30 seconds.

NadiShodhan Pranayam

How to do:

Sit comfortably with your legs crossed.

Place your left hand on the left knee.

Exhale and then use your right thumb to close the right nostril.

Inhale through the left nostril and then close the left nostril with your fingers.

Open the right nostril and exhale.

Inhale through the right nostril and then close.

Open the left nostril and exhale through the left side.

Consider this as one cycle.

Continue for up to 5 minutes.

Padangusthasana

How to do:

Stand on the floor with your feet 6 inches apart.

Flex your quadriceps (front thigh muscles) to lift the kneecaps.

Exhale and fold from your waist.

Keep your back, neck, and head in a straight line.

Grab your big toes with your hands.

While inhaling, straighten the arms and raise the torso to release the hamstrings.

While exhaling, fold back down into the forward bend. Continue this for several breaths.

Always complete your practice by finishing with an exhalation on the left side.

Because we humans do not know how to release tension, it builds up in our bodies and causes

discomfort on both a physical and emotional level. We can create a more balanced mental state and reduce stress, panic, and anxiety in our lives by engaging in the ancient practice of yoga, which consists of asanas, meditation, and pranayama.



10 Best Warm Places to Travel in Winter

Sure the winter months have their perks. Ski season is great, and of course, there's the festive period. But the cold. Oh, the cold. It digs deep under your skin, straight to your bones, sending chills down your spine and up to your chattering teeth. If you're looking to escape the frigid air — even for a quick respite —

we've got good news for you. There are plenty of year-round, warm-weather destinations waiting to welcome you.

From island getaways to sizzling cities, here are 10 of the best warm places to travel in winter.



01 Ambergris Caye, Belize

With direct flights from several U.S. cities (including Chicago, Houston, Atlanta, and Miami), getting to this Central American nation is easier than you think. It's a country filled with lush, verdant landscapes, including a tropical forest home to plenty of monkeys and even a few rare jaguars. But the true star here is its coastline. To experience the white-sand beaches at their

best in the winter months, make your way to Ambergris Caye, the largest island in Belize. It's known for its water sports, including plenty of diving and snorkeling, thanks to the nearby Belize Barrier Reef. For a luxe visit, book a few nights at Alaia Belize, which not only provides stellar beach access but also has a glass-bottom pool for good measure.



02 Mexico City, Mexico

Another destination with plentiful direct flights to and from the U.S. that deserves a spot on your winter vacation list is Mexico City. The capital of Mexico is flush with cultural attractions, including countless museums (though we'd be doing you a disservice without specifically calling out

the Frida Kahlo Museum), incredible shopping for both high-end and local markets, and some of the best restaurants in the world (we're looking at you, Pujol). In the city, make Las Alcobas your home base. The luxury hotel offers lavish guest rooms and a tranquil spa to relax in after a day of urban exploration.



03 Key West, Florida

Make your way to the southernmost destination in the continental U.S. for a little sun all year long. Key West is a true delight in the winter months as the average high temperature never really falls below 75 degrees Fahrenheit. It's the perfect place for fruity cocktails on the sand, sunset strolls down Duval Street, and more Key lime pie than you think

you can handle. Make the most of your time next to the crystalline waters by booking a stay at Casa Marina Key West, a historic inn that's been in operation since 1920. Through the hotel, you can book local food tours, golf outings, and sailing charters, or you can choose to simply sit by the pool and soak in the Floridian sun.



04 Rangiroa, French Polynesia

The French Polynesian archipelago is made up of hundreds of islands, with a few key spots (think Bora Bora and Moorea) getting most of the attention. If you're hoping to head somewhere a little less crowded, opt for one of its lesser-known destinations,

like Rangiroa. Located about an hour's flight from Tahiti, the atoll is made up of endless beaches, along with a massive lagoon brimming with sea life. Book the Hotel Kia Ora Resort & Spa, which boasts stunning overwater bungalows and villas with private plunge pools.



05 Panama Highlands

Panama is another destination with splendid coastlines, but its interior hillsides shouldn't be overlooked, especially for a winter vacation. The Panama highlands are home to gorgeous green mountains that are ideal for bird-watching

and adventures such as exploring hanging bridges. Plus, it's home to a stellar coffee scene worth tasting. Book a stay at The Haven, an adults-only wellness hotel that'll help you get on a coffee tour as soon as you land.



06 Namibia

No matter where you go in Africa for a safari, odds are you'll have a great time, so why not take it off the well-worn path and head to a more remote destination? Namibia delivers on the secluded location and most certainly guarantees warm winter weather. It's also the perfect place for a safari to see animals like

lions, elephants, leopards, and rhinos trotting through seemingly barren landscapes. There are several outfitters in the area, but Natural Selection is top-notch. It has numerous camps to choose from, including the famed Shipwreck Lodge on the Skeleton Coast.



07 San Juan, Puerto Rico

Those wanting to mix in some beach time with a little history need not look further than San Juan, Puerto Rico. The city by the Caribbean Sea is as idyllic as they come, with long stretches of white-sand beaches and historical attractions like the Castillo

San Felipe del Morro. Visitors will also find lots of delicious spots to eat (make reservations at Cocina Abierta). In San Juan, it's best to go boutique, so check into the O: LV hotel, which features a rooftop bar and pool offering the best views in town.



08 Dubai, United Arab Emirates

There's nothing better than the desert heat in the dead of winter. When the first cold snap hits, book your ticket to Dubai. In this desert oasis, you can do just about anything you wish, including taking a dip in the ocean, going shopping at some of the world's most

luxurious stores, dining at multiple Michelin-starred restaurants, and even climbing the tallest building in the world. Check out Atlantis, The Palm, which is a certified playground for those looking to indulge in the finer things in life.



09 Bangkok, Thailand

The best time to visit Bangkok happens to be over the winter. It's when the weather is still prime, but the monsoon season is in the rearview mirror. The city is absolutely massive, so it's best to book a lengthy visit or get a guide — there are tons of tour options on sites like Airbnb Experiences that focus on food, culture, and

photography.

Don't miss out on the city's canals, either — you can book an outing on a Thai long-tail boat. Make the Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok your home in town, which took the number one spot for the best hotel in Bangkok in Travel + Leisure's 2022 World's Best Awards.



10 Bahamas

Sometimes, you just need to get away and not think about a single thing. And that's exactly what you can do in the Bahamas, an island chain that's just a three-hour flight from New York City. There are

a number of beautiful destinations to see here, and thankfully, many of the archipelago's inhabited islands are home to all-inclusive resorts that are ideal for families, couples, and even solo travelers